

NEWSLETTER

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FORUM FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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TESOL honours Indian Education Leader



Dr. K Lakshminarayana was presented the TESOL Global Advocacy Leadership Recognition for his role in advancing the quality of English language education in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Dr. Lakshminarayana helped establish the Andhra Pradesh State English Lecturers Retraining Program in collaboration with the U.S. Regional English Language Office in New Delhi.

More on page 19

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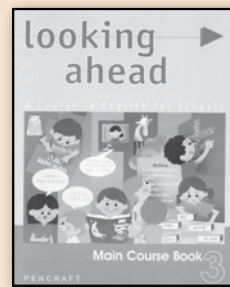
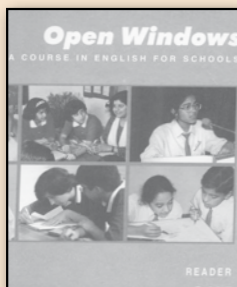
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From the Editors

The Tasks Ahead

During the last nineteen years FORTELL has organized several seminars, workshops and a few national level conferences, in-service Teacher Training and Capacity Building programs. Some of its members have also participated in the national and state level educational bodies (e.g. NCERT and SCERTs) in curriculum and syllabus planning. It has now 231 life members and one Chapter in Kolkata and is also an affiliate of IATEFL, U.K. and TESOL, USA. At present, it has a website and brings out regularly three issues of its newsletter in January, May and September. Since the newsletter has increasingly acquired the character of a journal, the executive committee proposes to convert one of its issues into a proper journal that will focus on the specific problems that English teachers face in their classes and would also include articles dealing with professional development of teachers, provide reviews/ annotated bibliography of ELT books that are of relevance to the practicing English teachers. FORTELL is also working towards bringing out two monographs—one on teaching of narrative and the other on evaluation.

But we have yet to do things that will raise our heads high. We as a teachers' body must meet more regularly and chalk out an annual plan of action and carry it out with a lot more rigor than we have shown until now. One of the major problems that we have been facing is the problem of attendance in our meetings. Some of the oft-cited reasons for not attending the association

meetings are the distance the members have to travel and the time and money they spend in doing it. We tried to redress this problem by choosing different locations in the city but it has not made any significant difference in the number of members attending the meetings. It is felt that unless we meet and interact with other members more frequently, we can not thrash theoretical and practical issues and evolve a collective understanding that may emerge as the hallmark of our group identity. It is proposed that if we group our members in terms of their place of residence and label each group as a Chapter of FORTELL and assign it a certain plan of action to be executed in a year, it may not only improve attendance but also achieve the targets that the group may set for itself at the beginning of the year. These groups can then meet one another 3-4 times in a year for sharing the progress they have made in their respective groups.

Although FORTELL has made significant headway during the last nineteen years, we need to reflect on the reasons why we have not built the kind of image that we could have built during this period. One of the reasons that come to my mind is that we have not spelt out any specific agenda for the professional growth of our teachers. We no doubt hold seminars and workshops on ELT issues, we do not seriously reflect on how these would serve the interests of our members. Very often we give our consent for a seminar/workshop either because some members have proposed it or some eminent speaker is available at the moment or

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because it would add another feather in our cap. We need to stop this sort of ad hoc decision in planning an academic event and seriously think about what sorts of inputs our teacher members require for their professional growth, and strictly according to this understanding we should look for resource persons for our workshops or seminars. Once the teacher members begin to feel that the seminar/workshop they attend would benefit them, they may decide to be present in it irrespective of time and distance.

We have very bright teachers amongst us but they don't know how to utilize their potential beyond teaching their classes. We must as a professional body first need to look within the group and make an optimal use of our own resources. This will not only raise the confidence of our members but also raise our prestige. For

example, we could create teams of competent and professionally sound teachers from amongst us who could lead the in-service teacher training teams to train the teachers wherever they are needed. FORTELL should emerge as an autonomous academic body and a force to reckon with. Both the state level and national level educational institutions should invite us to assist them in teacher training and capacity building programs they undertake. FORTELL has been receiving such requests from schools across the country particularly after English has been introduced as a compulsory subject from class 1 in most of the states in India. Since there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of teacher trainers for English we have been requested to help these schools.

Our services are also needed in remote and rural parts of the country. There are no teachers

of English. We need to train subject teachers to teach English and create teaching modules for teaching English in such situations where English is learnt in circumstances where there is hardly any one to fall back upon in case the teacher or the learner needs any help. It is imperative for us that we think of a multilingual pedagogy of teaching English particularly for these circumstances. We should look upon the language of the child as an asset rather an obstacle for learning English. This will make learning of English less an intimidating experience for the beginner and also may in the long run make him a proficient bilingual user of English and the language he generally uses outside the English class.

We should also create opportunities for our teachers to be professionally trained to meet the growing demands for a variety of highly paid jobs in the print and

visual media, and advertising and service industry.

We should also train and encourage our bright teachers who are very diffident and don't know their creative potential for writing in English to produce interesting and contextually relevant materials for their students. The services of these teachers could then be used for creating better textbooks in English.

It is only when we undertake such programs that our members would feel not only proud of FORTELL but also have a sense of progress and satisfaction and bring more and more members to its fold.



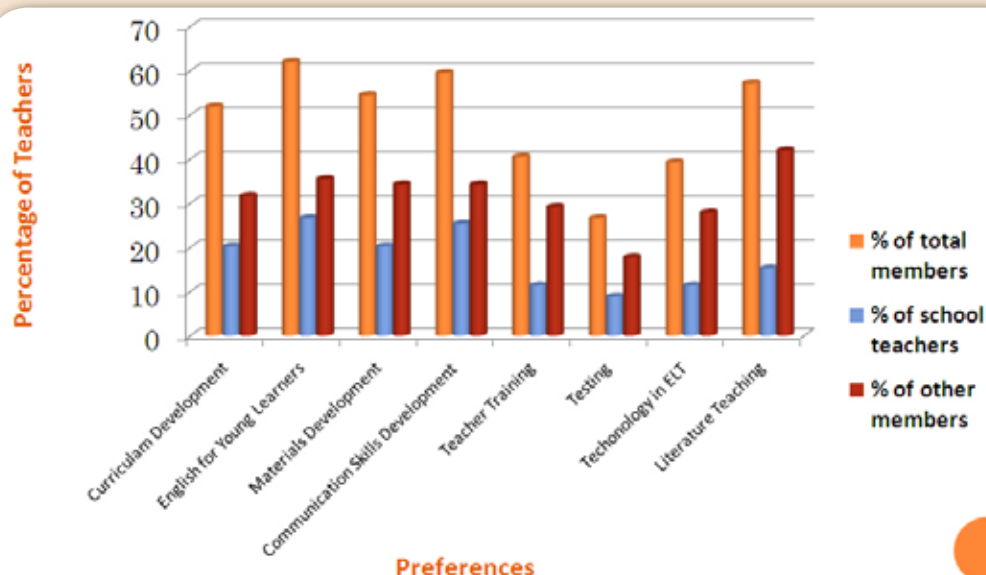
A.L. Khanna



Madhu Gurtu

** The views expressed in the articles by the authors in this issue do not reflect the views of the editors.*

Professional Interests of FORTELL Members



ARTICLES

Innovating classroom techniques to impart skills in Spoken English at elementary school level

Bhavani

This paper aims to tackle pedagogical inertia and free the teaching staff from the attitude of routines and make them use innovative classroom techniques at the elementary level.

Let there not be an emphasis on sentence writing

Writing of sentences, though euphemistically called simple sentences, from standard II itself is rather premature for a child of just six years. Writing of sentences in a sentence form is to bring in grammar through the back door. For a child with its mind only marginally developed nothing could be more frightening than instructing him in subtleties and nuances of grammar. It would, surely, scare away the child from the classroom and effectively kill his aptitude for learning English, with all its complexities and peculiarities.

Spoken English first Written next

Another point, which would bear repetition, is that the focus all along should be on fluency and not accuracy. As the child grows up learning English right from

day one, he picks up through an unconscious process an acceptable form of English when he learns it from the lips of the teacher who has been professionally trained.

Let there not be an emphasis on grammar items

If grammar with its components such as adjectives, pronouns, and present continuous tense is to be drummed into his ears, the child will surely find learning of English a far off dream. Knowledge of grammar will come on its own, when the teacher handles the class in a competent manner. Grammar is present in the very atmosphere of the classroom and the child is allowed to breathe and enjoy the air of grammar without any inhibition.

Teaching of Rhymes

The content for the teaching of rhymes should be substantially increased. No doubt, the child will begin it in standard I and continue it in standard II but at both the stages, the teaching should be taken up in an intensive manner and not dealt with in a perfunctory manner. The children if they have

to develop love for rhymes should be told how to sing the rhymes in a conventional musical manner. As it is, the child is just taught to repeat it as though it were a “vaipaadu” (Multiplication table). Such a process deprives learning of rhymes of life and animation.

In-service training for the teachers

It would be strange but it is true that we have to ask the teacher “Teacher! Teach yourself!” Technically, and in principle only such teachers who have undergone proper vigorous training in the in-service training could be relied upon to attain a level of professionalism in the handling of English teaching from standard I itself.

The main handicap comes in the form of flawed pronunciation, accent and intonation when we speak English. It is a common experience to find teachers pronouncing even Tamil words in a ‘slangish’ way. When we undertake to introduce teaching of English from standard I itself in an ambitious way, no loopholes should be left in the planning and implementation. When the child is instructed to speak English in an acceptable way half the battle is over. It is speaking which has to be taken in hand first. Writing will take care of itself.

Another salient feature of this approach is that the novice child sheds any sense of defeatism in him and builds up a requisite level

of confidence and hope that he has been well put by the teacher on the road to the mastery of English language. As it were, the child develops love, pride and passion in the possession of communication skills.

The keynotes of the in-service training should include such aspects as

- Doing the rhymes in time-honoured fashion as in English country.
- Attaining competency in bringing the child up in communicative skills (Spoken English).
- It is a fact not known to many that secrecy of mastering English language lies in mastering prepositions. The scope of the knowledge of prepositions and its practical use have not been fully realized by many of the

teachers themselves. It is accepted by all that short sentences are more vigorous and forceful than long sentences. A judicious and apt use of prepositions imparts glow and strength to the style of a speaker or writer.

- Another allied factor is the role, which idioms and proverbs play in the force of English style. But a note of caution has to be sounded here. Overuse of idioms could be cloying like pickles. So, everything in right proportion. The idioms should be there but they should not be over used.
- In the in-service training, the teacher must learn the newer techniques of teaching the child in the writing of alphabet, instead of doing it in the formal and heavy manner. The child should be taught the use of strokes and curves and

loops. The initial step should be to tell the child to just draw lines, curves etc. By this way all the horrors of making the child learn the alphabet are done away with. The child learns it in a playful way.

Teaching English daily and not for 3 days a week

The new scheme would end as a still-born child if teaching of English were to be done on LOE (Life Oriented Education) basis. Teaching and learning could succeed only when it is carried on from day to day. This means that regular fixed hours should be allotted on a daily basis.

If the above points are taken into consideration, classroom teaching would enhance its usefulness.



Bhavani is a Ph.D student at Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

Writing Skills- A Major Concern for the Budding Magnates

Shalini Kalia

Quite contrary to the prevailing notion that the students of reputed professional colleges possess excellent communication skills, these students who flaunt their style with superficial American accent lack acceptable and grammatically correct writing skills. This over confident section, which remains unaware of its grey area, gets a shock of the life when it scores poor ranking in professional courses due to incompetent writing skills.

It is a major concern for all the faculty and trainers of English language that the students pursuing management or technical courses despite having an excellent command of speaking skills lack cohesiveness, clarity, coherence and tend to make a lot of grammatical errors in written communication. In an attempt to explore the reasons behind this, insufficient writing practice at school level can be considered as one of the major reasons. Other

than this, in the modern technical world of SMS, emails, chatting etc the truncated version of various English words and sentences has done great harm to the writing skills of a person. The people habitual of deformed language used in SMS and emails fail to do justice when it comes to formal writing. Moreover, directly typing on the PC has not only affected the handwriting but also the brain storming required to use correct spelling, vocabulary and syntax. With the letter writing

becoming an obsolete form of communication people after passing out from the school hardly get into writing practice other than appearing for written exams which more or less are subject oriented crammed version and don't leave much scope for innovation and blossoming of creative talent of a person.

It would not be an exaggeration to remark that similar to Mathematics, English too requires constant practice for an excellent command of spelling, logical development of ideas, correct usage of vocabulary and grammar. It is high time everybody understood the prime requirement of written communication in the career. Speaking skills which are given more importance in comparison to the writing skills may help in accomplishing ephemeral laurels but writing skills may mar the fortunes of a person if not attended to timely. We as the trainers of English Language need to make the students understand very clearly that this is the skill which is indispensable and the learning process should be an ongoing process for acquiring success.

While interacting with the students pursuing B Tech, management courses or technical courses, the following areas for improvement have been identified –

- Structural pattern of Business communication
- Judicious implementation of deductive/inductive approach
- Cohesiveness
- Preciseness
- Spelling
- Correct usage of vocabulary
- Punctuation
- Persuasiveness

- Clarity
- Completeness
- Syntax

At the outset, the problems mentioned above in written communication for sure give an impression of cliched issues but a serious insight into it demands restructuring of the curriculum comprising more of written assignments following rigorous critical appreciation. Other than redesigning the curriculum, the pedagogy needs a lot more attention where the students are encouraged to pen down their creative ideas freely along with constant practice of business communication so as to bloom into prospective business magnates. By making the creative writing and essay writing competitions a regular feature of the curriculum and considering the number of articles, stories, case studies etc published as a parametre for recognition, we can give an impetus to the creative writing skills.

Above all, voracious reading is undoubtedly the sure shot way to enhance learning skills since it gradually polishes the style and presentation of thoughts while writing besides adding to the knowledge base.

Let us take a glance at some handy tips for effective written communication-

- Sentence lengths need to be adjusted according to the readers, the subject matter and to the demands of style
- Maintain coherence to show logical relationship between the elements and construction
- Ensure logical development of ideas

- Prefer short sentences
- Break the sentence. When a sentence is loaded with a lot of information, it becomes very difficult to decipher the meaning.
- Be stringent with words
- Avoid cluttering phrases
- Avoid pleonasm or redundant phrases
- Avoid roundabout expressions
- Avoid needless repetition
- Prefer active to passive voice
- Avoid ambiguous sentences
- Avoid repetition of key words and phrases
- Choose examples from real life situations
- Illustrate and demonstrate your ideas with the help of graphs, figures, charts, examples
- Be objective and concrete in expression
- Avoid jargons and high sounding technical terms

Moreover, writing requires multiple stages. The very first stage is pre-writing wherein the writer needs to give a serious thought to the theme and genre he is interested in. In the second stage i.e. drafting, one pens down one's ideas on the paper in its raw form. Here the emphasis is more on the content rather than the delivery style or presentation. The third stage requires critical reading of the draft so as to evaluate the content, structure and logical flow of ideas. The next stage is rewriting the draft keeping in mind the critical observations along with polishing the language and expressions. Finally, the last stage demands comprehensive reading to ensure fulfillment of various aspects of the topic.

The regular practice with determination to master the art of writing skills will definitely ensure a promising career. It is the biggest asset for all the professionals who have to everyday juggle with various business correspondences ranging from reports, letters, memos, e-mail messages to technical proposals, instruction manuals, CV, resumes etc.



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Notes for Contributors

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The deadline for September 2008 issue is August 31, 2008.

THE WORLD ENGLISHES AND THE TEACHING OF PRONUNCIATION

Pradip Sharan

Among the approximately 3000 languages spoken in the world English is the only language spoken by around 700 million people all over the world. There are approximately 400 million native speakers of English. There are around 300 million second language speakers, who have approximately native-like competence in English. It is also estimated that at the present time there are approximately 100 to 1000 million people who are the learners of English as a foreign language.

The 'spoken form' of English ranges from Pidgin, Creole to Standard English. The Pidgin and Creole forms of English are found in West Indies, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Surinam. The functional domain of English, in the form of a foreign language, is found in many European countries, especially Western European countries. The size of the population of English speakers in this world, and the existence of the variety of Englishes give the indication of the diversity in English language. We do have variations in English tongues, such as, in USA, England and South Africa etc. we also find dialectal variations of English in England and the USA..

We have a variety of Englishes (e.g. Babu English, Cheechee

English, Nigerian English etc.), which are found among the second language speakers of Common Wealth countries. The differences in the variety of English are due to the non-native innovations in pronunciation, vocabulary, usage, discourse and style. So, the variations in the variety of Englishes are at the accentual, lexical, syntactic, grammatical and discursal levels.

The difficulty for the teachers of English, especially "Spoken English", is that what variety of English to be chosen as a model for the teaching of English, keeping in view that English has become a Lingua Franca and there are varieties of Standard Englishes throughout the world. Secondly, what pedagogies to be applied for teaching English pronunciation? Here, it is important to note the observation of Braj B. Kachru that the variation within "non native" varieties is "pedagogues' nightmare" and the homogeneity of localized varieties (e.g. South African, Indian, Singaporean etc.) is a myth. Moreover, he poses one question before us i.e., "how are the norms of intelligibility for English to be defined now that English has acquired various culture specific and region specific norms?" He also suggests that "the cross cultural and international

uses of English demand new concepts, new types of research and research methodology, and new teaching strategies.”

Bryan Jenner attempted to determine the common features of all the native speakers of varieties of English and arrived at the “Common Core”, a list of features of English Pronunciation he considered essential for intelligibility anywhere in the world. But his analysis took into account only the native speakers. Jennifer Jenkins in her book “The phonology of English as an International Language” suggests new phonological set for International English speech. She has revised the concept of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) to ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). Jenkins has suggested a reduced Phonological set. Jenkins’s LFC (Lingua Franca Core) identifies seven areas of error in the Learners Pronunciation. They are as follows:

1. Vowel Length
2. Consonant Conflations
3. Phonetic realizations
4. Consonant Cluster Simplification
5. Tone Group
6. Nuclear/Contractive stress (but not tone)

Here, I endeavour to answer the problem of the teachers of English, and of Braj Kachru as well. Till recently, R.P. was the model for teaching pronunciation to the non-native speakers of English. But today, many have questioned the credibility of R.P. as a representative language of the native speakers of England.

Ronald McCauley was one of the first to question and point out the truth that only three percent of the U.K. population uses this prestigious accent, and this percentage is also falling. David Crystal is in favour of “Standard Scots” as a better model compared to R.P. for the learners of English. Robin Walker argues that till recently nobody really challenged the idea that a native speaker determined the measure of success of intelligibility for the speakers of English. But now the role of English has changed in the world context, and so we have to re-examine the concepts like ‘native speakers’ or ‘second language speakers’ etc.

In this regard, Kachru proposed the choice between an idealized Exo-normative model (which refers to a native model e.g., American or British, for emulation and teaching) and an Endo-normative model. Endo-normative model refers to a local educated variety as a model for teaching, as in the case of India or Nigeria etc., where English is a second language.

After considering the “model” issue, one confronts the issue of the choice of methodology and the content for teaching pronunciation. The issue of content will raise the question of the role of culture in language learning because the material for teaching will have some ingredients of culture. In this regard McKay opines that the role of culture in the context of teaching EIL (English as an International Language) is to establish interculturality. Smith argues that the learners of EIL would be able to explain their

cultures to others. He also argues that in the case of EIL the English language doesn’t belong to any one culture but promotes cross-cultural understanding in a global village context.

I agree with McKay that the cultural aspect in language teaching is reasonable in the domain where English is a second language but with respect to ELF I agree with Smith’s view that English would help in cross-cultural understanding in a global village context.

On perusal of various propositions and suggestions, I conclude that the non-native English speaker should teach English pronunciation in the ESL context. The model of pronunciation would be the standard variety in a localized domain where English has acquired the status of second language such as in India, Zambia, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, and Singapore etc. The material for teaching in localized domain would be drawn from their own native literature which reflects their culture.

In the case of teaching English as an International Language the pronunciation model will be ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) / LFC (Lingua Franca Core) as proposed by Jenkins. Regarding the course content, I submit that it would draw material from diverse cultures of the world, for in EIL domain the language belongs to its user, and interculturalism rather than biculturalism should be the goal (Mc Kay: TESOL: 7). Smith defines the term “International Language” ‘as one, which is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another’.

The native English speaking countries already have their respective models i.e., their Standard English variety. So, a similar analogy may be applied for NE (Native English) as in the case of ESL (i.e., localized domain) because I consider ESL or Native tongue as one type of domain. The reason is that the target language is used in all walks of life in ESL domain. We find this type of situation in India, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Nigeria. Here, the learner is exposed to the target language most of the time. Moreover, learners start learning English at the primary stage of schooling and are exposed to both the native tongue and English language at the same time. According to psycholinguistic research, young children have no difficulty in learning two languages equally well at the same time in a bilingual situation.

Here, I would like to point out that phonetic symbols (IPA) should be taught to the learners at the earlier stage of learning English so that they may be able to use the dictionary for correct pronunciation. The methodology for teaching English pronunciation would be communicative as suggested in my research paper entitled "A Communicative Approach to the Teaching of Spoken English in India"-(AsiaTEFL Conference, Beijing, 2005).

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Bringing English Language to the Margins:

the Case of Inclusive English Education in India

Anju S Gupta

When Chandrabhan Prasad, a Dalit writer, hosted birthday celebrations for Thomas Macaulay on Oct 2006, it was perhaps at one level a rather ironic attention-getting gimmick, but it also opened up certain important issues.

"English, the Dalit goddess, is a world power today", claims Prasad. "For complete emancipation Dalit/ Adivasi parents ought to give English education – if necessary, working more hours, borrowing money, selling off jewellery, even mortgaging properties", he emphasizes, and it is becoming a widely shared sentiment. Over a century ago, Savitribai Phule, wife of social revolutionary Jotirao Phule, had written the same thing, saying in a poem, "shudras and ati-shudras (Dalits) now have the right to education, and through English casteism can be destroyed and Brahmanical teaching can be hurled away". Dalits still believe this. (Omvedt, 2006)

Dalits are of course, not the only ones to seek entry to the global world that English provides. Street children, rural India as well as the burgeoning middle classes are enthusiastic about learning English. In the middle spread of The Times of India, December 2000, a major industrialist acknowledged the contribution of, not management or computers, but the English language to the emergence of India as an economic power in the

global scenario. In IGNOU, school dropouts who were participating in a nine-month computer literacy programme demanded that a course in English form part of their curriculum. IGNOU had to accede to their demand. Coming to the aid of lacs of children deprived of studying English in school, the PM-appointed National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has recommended teaching of the language as a compulsory subject along with regional language/ mother-tongue from Class I across the country.

Only a few centuries ago, English language was a collection of dialects spoken within the shores of a small island. Now it includes such typologically distinct varieties as pidgins and creoles, 'new' Englishes and a range of differing standard and non-standard varieties that are spoken on a more or less regular basis in more than 70 countries around the world. English is now the main language of communication at the international level.

Implications of the Globalization of English

The global spread of English has had interesting sociolinguistic implications. In countries where it has been transplanted (both native and non-native varieties) it has imbibed many features of the indigenous language(s) and culture(s). English has, in turn,

enriched the language it has come into contact with. Mixed codes have developed which bring into question the very concept of "language".

There have also been very serious negative consequences of the development of English as a world language. English has been associated with death or virtual death, of many indigenous languages in those countries where it has been transplanted. North America, Brazil, Australia, Indonesia and parts of Africa are examples of the unprecedented rate at which indigenous languages are getting lost. Some estimates suggest that perhaps 80 per cent of nearly 6,000 language of the world will die out by the end of this century

One of the obvious effects of the global spread of English is the range of variation that exists within English language today and the diverse social contexts in which it is used. In the last fifty years there has been recognition of the new varieties of English that have emerged in countries where English has the status of a second rather than a foreign language. These local varieties of English are distinct from the native varieties of English.

Implication of English on Indian languages

The important status, role and function of English in India is now unquestioned, but what bothers sociolinguists is whether this role of English is leading to additive rather than subtractive bilingualism. Historically, India has been a multilingual country and has never promoted any language to be the dominant language. Even in the Mogul period, Persian could not achieve this status. Twenty years

later, Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) are still agonizing over the question of finding a "space" for the English language in India.

Several linguists have traced the advent of English in India. Kachru (1983) suggests that three distinct groups introduced English bilingualism in the Indian subcontinent. The efforts of these groups began as independent phases, but eventually they joined forces. Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) quote from various documents and are convinced that there is very little doubt that the grand design of the imperial forces to intervene in the educational system was to destroy its traditional institutions and instrumentalize the use of English for their ends. In this process it was inevitable that English became associated with the elite and the language of the underprivileged got stigmatized.

In pre-Independence India, the freedom fighters coming from different parts of the country initially used the language of the rulers to subvert their rule. However, Gandhi persuaded the Indian National Congress in 1925 to accept Hindustani as its official language for all its proceedings. Besides, people from non-Hindi speaking areas took to learning Hindi voluntarily. In a sense it became a symbol of our national unity in the anti-imperialistic struggle (Majumdar, 1970).

But after Independence, the scenario changed. The Southern and the Eastern States, who feared that it would lead to the political and economic supremacy of the Hindi region over the others, vociferously opposed the popularization and spread of Hindi. The debates of the Constituent Assembly held in 1949 clearly indicated the

significance of English in India. A compromise needed to be evolved to satisfy all groups. English was not listed in the Schedule VIII of the Constitution which included fourteen (now twenty two) Indian languages: Hindi was declared to be the official language of the Union and English was given the status of an associate official language for a period of fifteen years. As the appointed day (26 January 1965) for the abolition of English approached, there were widespread riots in several parts of south India. The protagonists of Hindi had failed to persuade the people of India to adopt Hindi as the only official and/or national language. Nehru was forced to alleviate the fears of those who did not know Hindi. In a speech delivered on August 7, 1959, Nehru assured the people of the non-Hindi-speaking areas that English would continue to be an alternative language as long as they wish it to be so.

English now has become even more deeply entrenched in the Indian society. It is the main language of higher education, administration, judiciary and journalism. A high level of proficiency in English will significantly improve one's chances for easy entry in the corporate sector and ensure quick professional growth.

As Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) state, the anti-Hindi agitation made it abundantly clear that monistic solutions would not work in a plurilingual society and that policy decisions have to be participatory in nature. The association of English with the colonial rule has been de-emphasized and its importance as a language of wider opportunities and international contact is increasingly recognized. On the other hand, more and more

minority and tribal languages were claiming their share in the State's educational and power structure. It is therefore not surprising that the Government of India proposed a three-language formula in 1961 to resolve the language crisis.

The three-language formula, however, while it privileged the Regional language, did not give any importance to the tribal languages or the dialects spoken by the marginalized sections of society. The Regional languages had a 'high' status for the marginalized while their dialects were considered 'low' by the elite and the powerful. It is not surprising that sociologists like Kancha Illaiah suggest a re-looking at the division of India into linguistic states, emphasizing that the second state reorganization commission (SRC) necessitates a larger debate. Linguistic states deserve a re-look at a time when English is developing as a pan-Indian language. He says the rationale behind establishing a linguistic federation of Indian states is questionable, leading to linguistic nations emerging as in Europe and contradiction sharpening. He says in fact we should opt for the American model, developing one national language across the federation and dividing provinces into viable administrative units.

"Within 200 years of its introduction in India it (English) has become the language of easily about 100 million people. Its expansion in future will be several folds faster than earlier. It has become a language of day-to-day use for several million upper middle classes and rich. The poor and the productive masses have a right to learn the language of administration and global communication" (Illaiiah, 2007).

Due to the pressure on the governments, 9 of the 28 States

and three Union Territories in India have introduced English as a compulsory subject from Class 1. However, the quality of English language teaching is simply not good enough.

So, who are most strident voices opposing English for the masses and the deprived sections using the 'identity' argument and painting the bleak picture that the culture of India would be lost if this section is exposed to English at too early a stage. It is the elite intellectuals who send their children to English medium schools. English is their status symbol and if it becomes too widespread and democratic, it would lose its elite status and the power and opportunity that this language provides. Notice that it has been reported that the private schools in Delhi have not admitted the required number of SC/STs as per the government stricture.

What is required is liberation of English from its 'high' status, with the confidence that Indian bilingualism is both organic and differentiating (Khubchandani, 1983) instead of homogenizing. Indian multilingualism nurtures and celebrates flexibility and variability. It is within this flexibility that English occupies an important space in India. It is definitely another voice added to the Indian multilingual repertoire. It is a voice, which is being noticed today all over the world through our creative writers. Linguists and scholars may assert that it is not a voice that rose from the grassroots. In fact, it has to reach the grassroots, if we are to honestly give equal opportunity to all.



Anju S Gupta is Professor in Linguistics, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

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A Qualitative Analysis of Answer Scripts of English Course B, 2000

Shefali Ray

The performance of learners at the end of secondary level is an indicator of the extent of students' language proficiency and effectiveness of the inputs, by way of teacher proficiency, teacher training, learning material and classroom strategies. The quality and objectivity in evaluation measures is also an important factor that may influence achievement. It becomes important, therefore, to evaluate and examine both the learning materials and methods, and evaluation procedures in order to understand the language learning situation better.

Even as learning materials and teaching methods need to be suitable for a given situation, good evaluation procedures need to be updated according to the existing approach of curriculum transaction, avoid anomalies, be consistent and have a high degree of objectivity. This was the premise and the yardstick by which an analysis of the sets of question paper and 132 answer scripts of the Class X Board papers of English Course B, 2000 of the Central Board of Secondary Education was undertaken at the SCERT, New Delhi, in the year 2002.

The performance of the students of government schools in English, Course B at the secondary level has been a matter of concern for the authorities, as, in spite of various interventions at the administrative and school level, the learners' achievement showed a downward trend which could be attributed to:

- their language competence
- inadequate exposure to the language
- lack of attention to their learning styles
- compatibility (semantic and linguistic) of textual materials
- teaching strategies and,
- evaluation procedures adopted at the school and Board level.

In order to locate the areas of difficulty an analysis of textual materials, teaching strategies, evaluating tools and the answer scripts was conducted, as these multiple factors influence students' performance.

The following observations are made on the basis of the analysis of the answer scripts:

Section A (Reading)

These questions test the ability to comprehend unseen passages. They were attempted by almost all the students, and a small number amongst them handled the passages fairly efficiently, especially the one on a familiar topic. The questions involving higher order comprehension skills of interpretation and inference were not attempted well. Majority of students appeared to be handicapped by a limitation of understanding and language ability. Though they could locate the answers with the help of verbal clues available in the questions they could not construct suitable responses. As a result, they picked up large chunks from the text and reproduced them sometimes spelling the words incorrectly.

The questions were replete with difficult words which were not really basic to the comprehension of the passage. Some were slightly convoluted, having a complex structure. The student would have spent some time trying to understand them.

The analysis also revealed that their inadequate vocabulary made it difficult to guess the meaning of the new words from the context. Certain questions were anomalous eliciting three responses instead of one and some did not lead the student to the connotation of the word.

The conclusion drawn was that the students have not developed the basic reading skills and their exposure to reading material beyond the textbook is negligible.

Section B (Writing)

An analysis of the answer scripts showed that the CBSE objectives have not been realised to even a reasonable extent.

Students were unable to write a report using the correct format and language, as some responses had either the format of a letter or a notice. This indicated the fact that the students were unaware what report writing involves. Moreover, no examples were available in the existing prescribed textbooks, to serve as a clue for the teacher and as a model for the students.

Among those who attempted the question on free writing, many deviated from the given topic trying their best to fit into the answer a paragraph on an allied topic earlier learnt by rote. The responses

of the rest lacked organization, carried faulty expressions, incorrect syntax, incorrect spelling and punctuation. Visual/verbal input or a lead sentence in the question might have provided the much needed support.

Stereotyped topics in the question paper encourage memorization, which defeats the purpose of the testing tool. One classic example is of a paper where a memorized paragraph had been 'reproduced' in an almost impeccable form but the answers to subsequent questions were semantically and syntactically incoherent. Though the questions on free writing were based on the learners' own experiences yet they were unable to present their ideas coherently.

Most appeared comfortable with informal letters while some displayed knowledge of the format of a formal letter. The rubrics, however, were rather long-winded and complex. Short and simple inputs could have facilitated understanding.

Generally, a lack of writing practice was evident from the responses to the questions on writing. A review of the textual materials revealed that no model of letters was available in the prescribed textbooks or workbooks leaving the students with nothing to fall back upon.

Section C: Grammar

Most of the students attempted the completion and transformation questions on grammar but displayed a tendency to over-generalize the rule especially regarding forms of regular and irregular verbs. Similarly, they displayed a lack of knowledge of subject-verb concord, the rule regarding double negatives, and a partial knowledge of connectors, general sentence structure and

punctuation and non-finites, often confusing between gerunds and infinitives.

Apparently, this confusion led to the use of mere guesswork. They were unable to convert a dialogue into the indirect speech, having practised narration only through discrete items. A deficient knowledge of the syntax of English was noticed generally.

A study of the questions revealed that the framing of the questions could have been improved, say, to allow the students to understand the specific shade of meaning of the required modal, the exact time frame in the case of tenses, the structure of the questions could have been more straightforward and simple. Finally, undesirable contexts like death could have been avoided in the questions.

Section D: Literature section (Textbooks)

In many instances, students failed to trace the context of the story but could locate the answers with the help of the clues but were unable to interpret or infer. Word attack questions were largely unanswered. Students displayed a general familiarity with the textbook but were unable to mould the answer as per the question, their answers thus carrying a lot of redundant material.

Certain responses (if luck favoured them) were rote-memorized but amongst the rest many had common language faults, grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, irrelevant and disjointed sentences and on occasions meaningless conglomerations of letters or words. Questions on interpretation and appreciation were not attempted by many.

Dependence on readymade help material was obvious which hinted

at the lack of reading skills and an inadequate exposure to the variety of reading texts in the coursebooks. Regarding poetry, it was noticed that many of the poems were slightly alien in their historical context, locale and their culture, even though the concept was not very difficult to comprehend.

Certain questions too could have been done with some reframing and simplification.

General Observations

1. The students' ability to read any passage familiar or unfamiliar with understanding is at a very low level. It is for this reason that they have failed to respond to the questions on the textbooks. The percentage of the students not attempting the questions based on the extract from the text is quite poor mainly because they cannot locate the reference. Their attempt to answer the questions on unfamiliar passages is also very superfluous. Their inability to attempt a question on word attack supports this conclusion. The same is true about their inability to answer questions based on supplementary readers.
2. This situation stems from the fact that the reading skills of these learners have not been addressed or developed. They have not been provided with an opportunity to become independent readers and attempt to comprehend a new text using different strategies of reading.
3. The students' inability to use knowledge of English language items such as connectors, modals, non - finites, appropriate form of

verbs shows that they know the terms but not the usage.

4. They are poor in writing any free composition whether a report or a letter, or a paragraph. They are unable to use right tenses and fail to construct sentences using prepositions and articles.
5. Students need to be provided greater practice in grammar in addition to the exercises given in the workbook. Clauses can be practised through completion tasks where only the situation is provided. The clause in its manifestation should not be given so as to allow students to apply rules of grammar according to the context. Students must be given exposure to the language and practice in grammar using situations to supply the context.
6. The teachers ought to teach the textbook for intensive study thoroughly to enable the students to have an insight into the intricacies of the lesson, concepts and language use. Students need to be allowed to interpret the text and notice the nuances of language in a particular type of discourse.
7. The Supplementary Reader is meant for extensive reading under the guidance of the teacher. It is important for the students to read the stories, understand them and empathise with the characters or the situation. Development of thinking skills and the skill of reading critically need to be developed instead of encouraging rote memorization of the responses provided by the teacher.

Summary of Attempted and Not Attempted Questions of 128 Answer Scripts

Question No.	Attempted	Percentage	Not Attempted	Percentage
1	125	97.66	3	2.34
2	127	99.22	1	.78
3	93	72.66	35	27.34
4	87	68	41	32
5	105	82.04	23	17.96
6	127	99.22	1	.78
7	120	93.75	8	6.25
8	126	98.44	2	1.56
9	124	96.88	4	3.12
10	101	78.9	27	21.1
11	124	96.88	4	3.12
12	112	87.5	16	12.5
13	113	88.3	15	11.7
14	96	75	32	25
15	95	74.22	33	25.78
16	99	77.35	29	22.65
17	42	32.72	86	67.18
18	60	46.88	68	53.12
19	61	47.7	67	52.3
20	61	47.7	67	52.3
21	59	46.02	69	53.98
22	61	47.7	67	52.3
23	58	45.32	70	54.68

Acknowledgements

1. The author acknowledges all the school principals and teachers of Delhi Schools who contributed to the project.
2. Dr. Janaki Rajan, the then Director, SCERT, Varun Marg, New Delhi
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4. Mr. Tara Singh Anjaan, Lecturer, SCERT

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Shefali Ray is an ELT consultant and has been associated with the British Council (ELTeCS), CBSE, NCERT, IGNOU and National Institute for Open Schooling and SCERT, New Delhi.

OPINION POLL

by Mukti Sanyal

STREAMING IN ENGLISH IN B.A. PROGRAMME

Streaming has become a contentious and neglected issue in the University of Delhi. This is in the context of the out-dated criteria that are still in use for streaming students to English A, B and C courses of the Revised BA Programme in DU colleges.

Teachers who teach these courses in colleges feel that it is imperative to change the criteria for streaming to accommodate the changed profile of college entrants caused by changes in the school curriculum in Delhi and eleven other states.

For instance, English was introduced from Class I in all government, MCD, Sarvodaya Schools in Delhi from 2003. Students who will come to colleges in 2016 will have all studied English from Class I. Even now, English Core is a compulsory paper for all government school students opting for Humanities, Science and Commerce Streams. Even in the Vocational Stream, English Core is compulsory for students opting for Computer Studies. In this stream too, students studying two languages, mostly study English. Only a very small number may have Hindi and Sanskrit, etc. As a result, there are very few takers (often none) for English B and C, which are then treated as soft options or simply not given

timetable/workload space. English A, on the other hand, has large numbers. This year the number of candidates who took the II/III year exams was over 6000 for A, around 500 for B and only 140 for C.

This frustrating mismatch leading to bad language teaching practices among both teachers and students is being totally ignored by the decision-makers in the University. While the course books and examination cater to three different levels of language proficiency – namely, A- Advanced, B- Intermediate and C-Pre-intermediate, the A classes are large and widely heterogeneous because the existing streaming criteria treat students from elite public schools, government and schools in rural and semi-rural areas at par because they have studied the same course(Core English) in Class XII. It fails to take into account the socio-economic factors that determine the extent of proficiency in English language. For instance, one of the teachers who has been teaching and correcting scripts for the Annual Exams for English A says that the pass percent is very low. Only one out of ten students passes.

With increase in the university's role in attending to the special needs of disadvantaged groups, it is essential that the criteria for

streaming should be changed. The issue had been held in abeyance since May 2007. Admission by marks recommended at the GB of English Teachers was rejected at the AC and referred to a Committee, which could not come to a decision. Please express your views in this column....it may make all the difference.



Mukti Sanyal is Reader in English, Bharti College, University of Delhi

The issue raised about streaming for English A, B and C streams for undergraduate students of Delhi University is a pertinent one and needs serious thought and attention of all the stakeholders in this venture, namely, the students, the teachers, the examiners and all the educationists who are concerned with teaching in general and language teaching in particular.

As a teacher, examiner, and also the materials writer who was deeply involved with the process of the designing of the new language syllabi and course material, I want to make a strong plea to the general body of teachers and the authorities concerned with policy making that the current practice of dividing students into A, B, and C streams for English according to their pass/ fail record in the school is not at all desirable. This division, convenient maybe in terms of applicability, is not a real assessment of the linguistic proficiency of the students in any way.

Moreover, while designing the present A,B and C courses, it was visualized that only the students with an advanced knowledge of the English language will be offered A course which will act as a kind of bridge between their foundation course and Discipline English course. Course B was designed keeping in mind the interests of a large chunk of students who have an intermediate knowledge and need to learn more about different aspects of English so that they are comfortable with using English in different situations. Pitching at a lower level, we had designed Course C for a majority of students who are still in need of remedial kind of work and who need strategies for vocabulary enhancement, paragraph writing, reading skills such as skimming, scanning and interpretation.

If we follow the present streaming pattern, the outcome will be doing injustice to the students who could benefit from Course B and C better by forcing a higher course on them.

It will be greatly in the interest of students if streaming could be for rationalized either by introducing a diagnostic test for the students after they take admission to BA programme or having a consensus about a higher cut-off for courses at different levels.



Madhu Gurtu is Reader in English, SPM College, University of Delhi

I agree that the criteria for streaming of students for the compulsory paper in English for the students of the BA Programme needs to be changed. The older system of allocating students to

various streams on the basis of the number of years they had studied English at school never worked very well but today it has become totally irrelevant. In the teaching of languages, where skills are involved, proper streaming is very important and this is a fact that is recognised the world over. If we keep our system of streaming shoddy, no amount of tinkering with syllabi, text books and other details is going to make our classes vibrant or our students proficient in the language. That lack of proficiency in English is keeping otherwise bright students out of the job market is now recognised by most and if our schools and colleges will not do the needful, students are going to flock to teaching shops and we should then not lament their existence. I would say that this is a matter that needs immediate attention.



Promodini Varma, Principal, Bharti College, University of Delhi

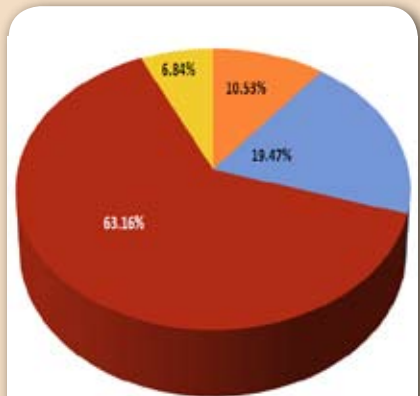
This is in response to the statement issued by you regarding streaming of English Courses at the Undergraduate level. I strongly feel that students should be given the option to choose the stream that they wish to pursue and are capable of pursuing. In order to judge their capability we could either go by their marks in Class X/XII marks or by a written test designed for this purpose. The test for streaming could be given to the students soon after they have taken their class XII examination. It would be independent of students' score in class XII English Paper and would indicate whether the student would be admitted to

Literature Course, English for the Workplace or Threshold English. A student should be given the option to move from one stream to another in second /third year on the basis of a test centrally prepared by the English Department, Delhi University but administered by the college where such a need arises. Such tests should be prepared afresh every year in complete secrecy by the Question bank of the Department.



A.L. Khanna, formerly Reader in English, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi

Profile of FORTELL's Life Members



■ Elementary School Teachers

■ Secondary School Teachers

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■ Others: NGOs, Press, Publishers

REPORTS

TESOL 2008 April 2-5, New York, USA

Meera Srinivas

New York city built and developed by immigrants from every region of the globe was the perfect setting for the theme Worlds of **TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry and Creativity**. The Convention, for a first timer like me was an eye-opener in many ways! Spread over 3 ½ days, it was held in two venues: Hilton New York and Sheraton Hotel and Towers, New York.

There were an array of activities like Workshops, Discussion groups, Plenary sessions, Academic sessions, Interest sections, Colloquia, Exhibits, Poster sessions, Networking, pre-and-post Convention Institutes, Early bird and Night owl sessions which provided a collaborative forum for attendees seeking innovative and cross-disciplinary approaches and solutions. This year's convention attracted approximately 9,000 delegates from all over the globe!

PLENARY SESSIONS

The highlight of the Convention was the opening plenary held at 5.30 p.m. on 2 April at the Hilton Grand Ballroom. After the opening remarks by the President of TESOL Sandra Briggs, there was an award ceremony in which Dr Lakshminarayana, Director, College Education, Andhra Pradesh, India was felicitated with an award and citation for his contribution to ESL training in Andhra Pradesh.

This was followed by a delightful, witty and inspiring talk on **Worlds of Practice: In search of Community** by Suresh Canagarajah, editor, TESOL Quarterly. His provocative

statements and questions like 'You can't impose outside pedagogies in communities', 'Why can't I use L 1 in an English classroom? Why can't TESOL move away from America centism and hold Conventions in other parts of the world?' won great applause from the audience. These were some of the key ideas that set the trend for celebrating difference and embracing diversity within TESOL.

Canagarajah spoke about 'How do you create an identity in a Community of Practice?' If you want to be part of the community you need to negotiate your space in the community (Communities of Practice – Etienne Wenger) This negotiation enriches not only you, but the whole community. In this search of identity, you can also find your other identities. These ideas constituted the essence of his presentation. In his speech, he also emphasized the notion of Brokering- the use of multimembership to transfer some elements of one practice to the other- and on the need for global organizations like TESOL to recognize plural collective voices, diversity of practices within local communities with their socially situated pedagogical practices, to enable a more constructive negotiation of constellation of practices and richer discourses in TESOL.

The other plenary speeches were equally interesting. William Grabe's interactive session on ten practical suggestions for teaching reading and the demonstration

of some of the techniques was useful for ESL teachers. Drawing on multiple teaching and research experiences in North America, Africa and Asia, Bonny Norton's plenary examined the ways in which ESOL practitioners negotiate changing identities in diverse sites of practice. In her inspiring talk, Shondel Nero, a native of Guyana and an applied linguist at New York University, discussed world Englishes and the role of ELT in a world of languages without borders. On the final day of the Convention (5 April), Penny Ur made a well-structured and clearly articulated presentation on Correctness and Correction in which she examined the questions: What is correctness in Global English? Is it worth giving correct feedback and if so, how? Her statement: 'as an applied linguist we should accept varieties of English' but 'as a teacher my obligation is to correct students' was truly thought provoking.

THEMES / SPECIAL INTEREST SECTIONS

The dominant themes of the sessions [discussion group, workshop, paper, report, colloquium and poster] were:

ESOL in Adult / Elementary Education, Applied Linguistics, ESL in Bilingual education, CALL, ESP, Intercultural communication, ESL materials, Second Language Writing, Intensive English Programmes, Teacher Education and Video and Digital Media.

There were a range of presentations on these themes from ESL teachers, teacher-educators, researchers from different countries, contexts and communities of practice, giving the entire Convention a global outlook.

A number of presentations focused on developing ESP programmes for the health, aviation and engineering sectors. The papers were project-based and demonstrated the use of interesting authentic materials, indicating the significance of ESP in American ESL context.

ELECTRONIC VILLAGE

An Electronic Village was located in the Gramercy Suite in Hilton, hosted by the CALL Interest Section. This was a great place to explore computer-based resources for language teaching and learning in the classroom and online.

EXHIBITS

A unique feature of the Convention was the Exhibits located on the second and third floors of the Hilton. Here, the exhibitors representing a host of American and International publishing houses like OUP, CUP, McGraw Hill, Longman Pearson etc., non-profit educational organizations, publishers of instructional software set up booths to exhibit their teaching materials, books, educational software, kit and tools. This gave the attendees an opportunity to buy educational materials, pick

up useful catalogues, register requirements with different publishing companies, universities, and to network on a whole range of issues. There was a flurry of activity in the booths all the time indicating their popularity as a meeting place for educationists from all over the globe.

Overall a great international experience which gave me a great opportunity to network with other professionals in the field.



Meena Srinivas, EFL University, Hyderabad

TESOL Honours Indian Education Leader

FORTELL's nominee, Dr. K. Lakshminarayana, IAS, Commissioner of Collegiate Education for the Government of Andhra Pradesh, India was awarded the TESOL Global Advocacy Leadership Recognition for his role in advancing the quality of English language education in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL).

The presentation took place at the opening plenary of TESOL's 42nd Annual Convention and

Exhibit in New York City, New York, USA, before an audience of 5,500 English language educators from around the world on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, at 5:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New York.

Dr. Lakshminarayana helped establish the Andhra Pradesh State English Lecturers Retraining Program. A collaborative project with the U.S. Regional English Language Office in New Delhi, the program's objective is to improve the communication proficiency in English of local undergraduate

students through professional development of English language lecturers. The program has proved very successful, and has grown to include multiple post-secondary institutions throughout Andhra Pradesh as well as lessons broadcast over the state-run educational TV channel, MANA TV.

The direct outcome of this is the steep rise in the campus recruitment by IT companies from a meagre 5-6 % to an astounding 25-30% .Through his leadership in education, Dr LN has inspired his colleagues in different parts of India, as a result of which 2 other states in India are offering similar training through the English Language Fellow program.

Rajni Badlani setting up FORTELL' s display at the Affiliate booth at TESOL Convention, New York



TEACHER'S TRAINING

Workshop

A three day teacher's training programme was organized by Vidya Bhavan Society at Vidya Bhavan Resource Centre, Udaipur from April 11-13, 2008 to train English teachers teaching classes 1-2 in Vidya Bhavan for the textbooks that have been prepared for these classes and are proposed to be launched from July 2008. The textbooks are part of the complete English series meant for semi urban and rural children of Rajasthan and are being written under the guidance of Prof R. K. Agnihotri and Dr A.L. Khanna. The workshop had twin objectives: 1) to try out these materials with the teachers, and based on their feedback make last minute changes, if and wherever necessary, and 2) suggest a methodology/steps that could be used to gain optimal results from classroom transaction of these textbooks. The workshop was attended by teachers from three schools of Vidya Bhawan Society, and the staff members of Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre. The resource persons were: Prof R.K. Agnihotri, Dr A.L. Khanna and Ms Falguni Chakravarty. Dr Nisha Chandra helped to document the proceedings of the workshop. The workshop began with Prof Agnihotri outlining the principles that were followed in writing these books. Among several other things, he emphasized that the books have been planned keeping in mind the immense potential of the learner, use of multilingual approach to teaching English and engaging the learner with English

through whole class activities, pair/group work and making learning a problem solving and meaningful activity.

Mrs. Falguni Chakravarty, the coordinator of the books for classes 1-5, gave an effective demo of a lesson through reading aloud activity, extensive exploitation of the things shown in the picture, mixing instruction in English with corresponding commands in mother tongue. This was followed by group work and their presentations. All these presentations were followed by questions, critical assessments and feedback from all the teachers. This session generated some valuable feedback on the books as well on the methodology demonstrated by the resource person and various groups. Since most of the groups banked heavily on the mother tongue it was unanimously felt that the learner should be engaged with English optimally without intimidating him/her. It was suggested that multilingual teaching should be used only as a strategy, resource and a goal. There is no point paying lip service to multilinguality by translating a few sentences here and there. The idea is how to utilize the multilingual potential of the classroom most effectively. The underlying principle is an empirically well-established fact that languages flourish in each other's company; they die, rather quickly, in isolation.

C. Nisha Singh, Reader in English, Laxmibai College, University of Delhi

TALK BY SANDRA J BRIGGS



Ram Lal Anand College (University of Delhi), New Delhi and FORTELL, India jointly organised a talk by Ms Sandra J Briggs, President, Teachers of English to Other Languages (TESOL), USA on Thursday, the 14th February 2008 in the Seminar Room of the College. Dr Vijay K Sharma, Convenor of the Program, welcomed Mr. Richard Boyum, Director, Regional English Language Office (RELO), USIS, New Delhi; Ms Sandra J Briggs, the Chief Guest at the event; Dr Rajni Badlani, English Language Advisor, USIS, New Delhi; Dr N K Jain, President, FORTELL; Dr A L Khanna, Secretary, FORTELL; and all other guests and teachers from various institutions present there. Mr Boyum addressed the gathering and spoke about the role and function of RELO (which sponsored Ms Briggs's visit also). This was followed by almost an hour long power-point presentation by Ms Sandra J Briggs on "Developing as ELT Professionals: Teaching and Learning Strategies in ELT." The presentation was followed by an earnest and lively discussion. Ms Briggs also distributed an eight page handout of her presentation. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr D K Pabby, the Principal of the College and Chair of the event.

Vijay K. Sharma is Reader in English, RLA College (Eve.), University of Delhi

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

GENDER-BENDER

Falguni Chakravarty

Level: Pre-School

Time

30 minutes

Size of class

25 – 30

Objective

1. To identify one's gender
2. To perform short commands (Listening and Understanding)

Preparation

1. Children will listen to short commands and do the action according to their gender.

IN CLASS

1. Arrange class with sufficient space in the centre. Spread a *durrie* or a mat. All children will sit in the centre.
2. Give short commands –
 - (i) only girls stand up
 - (ii) only boys raise your hands
 - (iii) girls walk to the door
 - (iv) boys clap
 - (v) girls snap your fingers
 - (vi) boys and girls raise your left hand
 - (vii) girls bend forward
 - (viii) boys bend backwards
3. Children will do each action according to command.



Falguni Chakravarty is a freelance ELT practitioner

'Mmmmm' DICTATION

Falguni Chakravarty

Level: Primary

Time

30 minutes

Size of class

25 – 30

Objective

1. Grammar-Pronouns
2. Developing Listening skills.

Preparation

1. This dictation exercise is for filling in the gaps with the correct pronouns – 'He, She, it, they, them'
2. Prepare a list of sentences as given in the sample.

In Class

1. Dictate each sentence slowly and clearly.
2. Students will write each sentence in their notebooks.
3. Wherever a blank has to be filled in say 'Mmmmm...'
4. Students will fill in the blanks with the correct pronoun.

Sample

1. Ravi is in Class 3. _____ is a good singer.
2. Suma and Surabhi are sisters. _____ are learning to play the guitar.
3. My grandfather is 80 years old. _____ tells me interesting stories.
4. Rahul's friends visited _____ in the hospital. _____ took some fruits along.
5. Tanya's parents gave her a pen but _____ didn't like _____



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Language Activities and Techniques

Inder Mani Jain

Activity

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

Level

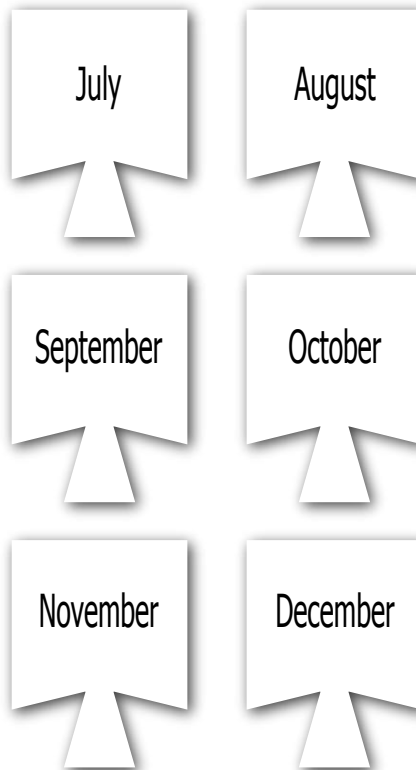
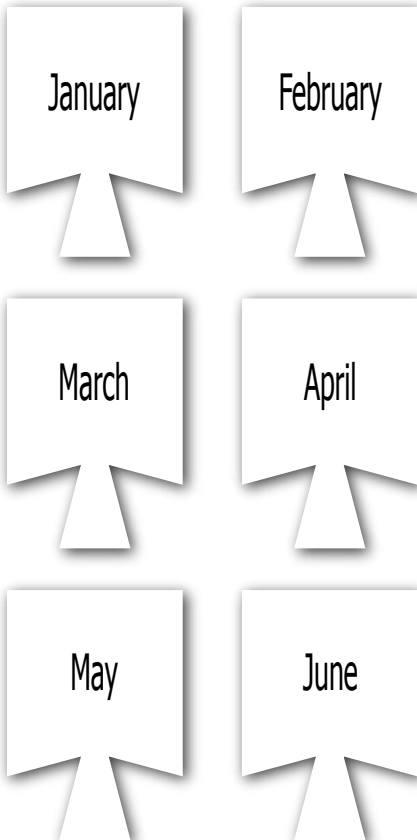
Primary and Middle

Objectives

- Developing listening and speaking skills
- Learning the names of the months.
- Developing sequential thinking
- Building vocabulary

Materials

Twelve flash cards bearing names of months as below and a medium size ball..



Procedure

Primary / Middle Level

Organise the following activities in a circle for interactive learning. A good way to begin is by talking about the day, date, month, the kind of weather, students' birthdays, festivals with primary students and the seasons, seasonal food, fruits, clothes, birthdays of famous personalities, religious and national festivals and the games indoors and outdoors with middle level students.

Activity: I

Children sit in a circle and the teacher joins them with all the flash cards in a box/bag. Ask students

what is the date today? Which day is today? Which month of the year is it now? After getting the correct response or let's presume it is April, flash the April card and encourage children to read and say April loudly collectively and individually as well. Invite a child from the circle whose name has initial sound 'a' and hand out the April card to him/her. Tell her/him to say loudly, I am April. Ask students what comes after April? If there is no response, show them different flash cards in the beginning and then the correct one to be selected by the students. Then encourage everyone to say loudly that May comes after April. Invite a child whose name begins with 'm' sound, hand out the May card and tell him/her to say loudly, I am May. Repeat the process until all the flash cards are exhausted.

Activity: II

Jumble up all the flash cards in the centre of the circle. Invite children individually to arrange them in the correct order from January to December. Allow one card to be played by one student. Clap for the children who played the card correctly in the first attempt. At the maximum give three chances and keep saying 'try again.' After the sequence is complete, ask students which is the first month of the year? And likewise the last / the second / the third...

Activity: III

According to the strength of the class, divide students into groups of twelve. One group will play at one time and others will act as

observers. Later, the roles will be reversed.

All the members of the play group sit in a small circle, each one holding the month card he/she represents. Teacher gives instructions and tells them that they are going to learn the names of the months in the correct sequence by using a ball. To model it she throws the ball to the student with January card and tells him/her to catch it and then say loudly 'I am January' holding the ball in one hand and January card in the other. Then the January student is asked to

aim the ball at February child, who catches it and then says loudly 'I am February.' Activity goes on until the December child gets his turn.

Activity: IV

Distribute all the twelve cards randomly in the class and tell the students with, cards to come out and stand first in the ascending order and then in the descending one. Make it more creative and interesting by asking winter months to make a cluster each and like wise the summer, the spring, and the rainy ones. Ask them what is/

are their favourite month(s) and why?

Middle Level

For middle level children group discussion could be organized on the topics- seasons, seasonal food, fruits, clothes, birthdays of famous personalities, religious and national festivals and the games indoors and outdoors followed by the presentations and then individual composition.



Inder Mani Jain, Education Officer with Directorate of Project Planning and In-service, DAV College Managing Committee, New Delhi.

PROFILE +

Rama Kant Agnihotri:

A Profile

It was in 1980, when a youngish man from G D Salwan college (now known as the Delhi College of Arts and Commerce), University of Delhi, took his first class in the Department of Linguistics. We were very glad that he was there because he taught with great efficiency, energy and vibrancy and we were sure that nobody could do better. He taught as if sociolinguistics was his mission and he found several converts. Soon, we found that he was not entirely well, and from time to time he would have severe angina pain in his chest and arms; but he carried on undaunted. Now, two open heart by-pass surgeries later, he exudes the same life-force.

This background is to tell you how far he has traveled - from a person with one paper in IRAL to hundreds of them in reputed journals, not to mention several books – his



most recent publications being in the area of Hindi grammar and multilinguality. This itself tells us how vast his range is - spanning from sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, research methods, morphology and translation studies to Hindi grammar.

But he is much more than a Linguist. He is a socially committed human being with a deep concern for the education of the underprivileged, the down trodden and the unreached. He has actively participated in the activities of Eklavya, one of the most radical innovator in school education,

contributing in a significant way to its primary education programme. He continues to lend his support to the various causes that he promotes by hands-on teaching and teacher training in remote area of the country in collaboration with a large number of NGOs. Besides, he has been fully involved in the curriculum changes in the NCERT and SCERTs across the country.

His major contribution to linguistics and education has been in his unrelenting espousal of the cause of using multilinguality as a resource, a pedagogical strategy and a goal, not only because it correlates with academic and cognitive growth but also because it leads to tolerance in this strife-ridden world. It is also an attempt to find 'space' for the local languages and the people who speak them.

He has led by example all the years that I have known him. What an inning and still going strong!



Anju S Gupta is Professor in Linguistics, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

BOOK REVIEWS

English in the World

Madhu Gurtu

English in the World, edited by Rani Rubdy and Mario Saraceni is a valuable and timely contribution to the current debate regarding the standardisation norms to be followed in the current scenario of global spread of English. As a consequence of the space that English has now occupied in international communication in arenas of commerce, communication, sports, science, technology and culture, a curious situation has emerged in which non-native speakers of English outnumber by far the native speakers. This obviously creates a diversity of ways in which English is used in various countries and there is a tension between the demand for perpetuating the standard variety (British, and now American as well) and the struggle made by non-native varieties to maintain their distinct identity. The situation is further complicated by the fact that whereas distinct varieties of English cannot be allowed to diverge from the native standard variety to the extent as to become mutually unintelligible, the goal of achieving native like competence for non-native speakers of English - apart from being undesirable - is also not possible.

The Introduction by the editors puts in perspective the intricate scenario presented by the spread of English as a global language with great lucidity, problematising the issue of the choice of an appropriate model in classroom pedagogy in view of the existence of three varieties of English, namely, Standard English, usually Standard British or American

English, World Englishes, and EIL/ ELF (English as an International Language/ English as a Lingua Franca). The editors have taken care to include wide-ranging perspectives by internationally renowned academics, whose reflections on the debate of norms forms the first section of the book, entitled *Conceptualizing EIL*. What is striking about the essays is that the discussions regarding the appropriate model to be adopted for English as an International language is not restricted to researchers and theoreticians but the views of teachers and their learners also find their voice in the debate. Ruanni's paper presents the dilemmas faced by the teachers and learners in the Filipino context in their attempts 'to reconcile the conflicting interests—access to standard English and an authentic grounding in the local culture. One wishes there were more such case studies presented in the volume.

The second section, **Pedagogical Implications of EIL**, explores the instructional choices available to all the practitioners in the teaching and learning of EIL in a manner that is 'sensitive to the local realities of ESL/EFL learners, and providing access to a globally relevant English language education without violating the multilingual and multicultural sensibilities that characterize their settings.' The very first essay in the second section by McKay asks for a re-evaluation of two notions in mainstream ELT: native-speaker competence as the goal of learning English and the need for the teaching materials to be



Ed Rani Rubdy and Mario Saraceni, continuum:

London 2006

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0-8264-8906 (paperback)

imbued with the British culture. The intellectually provocative interview with Suresh Canagarajah calls for a paradigm shift in the teaching of English globally. The section tries to be comprehensive as well as stimulating in presenting views on the question of curriculum design, effective teaching methodologies and materials in the global context.

I congratulate the editors for bringing together such diverse views in the attempt to tease out the tangles that English as the global language presents. The major contribution of **English in the World** lies in addressing many controversial aspects relating to English as an international language as well as providing insights into pedagogical issues in the global context. The book is also an invitation to all the stakeholders in the teaching /learning enterprise to reflect on and articulate their peculiar situations.



Madhu Gurtu is Reader in English, SPM College, University of Delhi

IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR SUDHAKAR PANDEY PASSES AWAY



I am sorry to inform of the sad demise of Professor Sudhakar Pandey, former Head of the Department of English, University of Poona. Professor Pandey was an erudite scholar and an eloquent speaker. He acquired proficiency in English language, having done his postgraduation in Linguistics from U.K. He published a number of research articles and books including Contemporary Indian Drama and G.B. Shaw. Professor Pandey's contribution to the growth of English literature in India is commendable. As Head of English Department, University of Poona, he organized several seminars and conferences. These include All India English Teachers' Conference, International Conference of Indian Society for Commonwealth Studies, International Conference of Indian Association of Canadian Studies and Annual Conference of Indian Association of American Studies. Also, he regularly organized the annual Golay Seminar on Indian Drama at the Department and published the proceedings. His death has left a void which cannot be filled. We pray to God to give courage and strength to his son Professor Pramod Pandey (JNU) and other members of the bereaved family to bear the loss!

R K Dhawan

Homage to Prof. Mangesh V. Nadkarni

Prof Nadkarni's passing away on 23 September 2007 in Pondicherry grieved and shocked his family, his friends, his admirers and his innumerable students spread all over India and the world, leaving a void behind.

Born in rural coastal Karnataka, Dr Nadkarni did his schooling from his native village, his graduation in English Literature from Kolhapur and MA from Poona University. He went on to do his doctorate in linguistics from University of California, Los Angeles after which he joined the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (recently renamed the English and Foreign Languages University) Hyderabad in 1970, where he taught and inspired generations of students before moving on to the National University of Singapore in 1985. He continued there till 1993 after which he devoted his retired life wholeheartedly to spreading the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother wherever he went.

During his years in CIEFL, Hyderabad, Prof Nadkarni acted as a fountainhead of knowledge, turning linguistics into an attractive field of study and research for all of us who had nurtured English literature as our first love. Later on, he moved into areas of language planning and policy decisions serving a key role in the national committees on language policy set up by the University Grants Commission regarding the changed role of English in the current scenario along with the need for changed syllabi and methodologies of teaching. Besides

his scholarship and brilliance of intellect, it was his gentleness, his magnanimity and his human touch that touched all who came in contact with him. With an impressive personality, a radiant face, a beautiful smile and a ringing voice, Prof Nadkarni could elevate even the most mundane discussions of facts to a level of profundity, adding a larger dimension to every subject.

A great teacher, a scholar of depth, a linguist and an educationist—all these facets of Prof Nadkarni were dearly loved by all his friends and students. Yet what overshadowed all these facets was his dedicated life of a sadhak- the devotion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother whose philosophy of Integral Yoga and vision of the Life Divine had illumined his path. In his book 'India's Spiritual Destiny: Its Inevitability and Potentiality', Dr Nadkarni reiterated that the life-affirming spiritual perspective of Sri Aurobindo can be a remedy for the ills of the modern India and the world. His talks on 'Savitri', which in his own words was a madness and passion with him, cast a spell on his audiences.

So, how does one mourn someone like him 'whose soul was set free' – someone who had glimpsed immortality in his mortal existence here?

We can only bow down in silence and in prayer.

Madhu Gurtu



DR. SHYAM SUNDER PASSES AWAY



Dr. Shyam Sunder, Professor of English at IGNOU is no longer with us. He fought a brave battle with cancer and passed away on the Republic Day, 2008 at the age of 62. An erudite scholar who made literary theory look simple he was one who loved to debate issues. As a critic he could be very rigid in his views but was willing to accept his error when you convinced him he was wrong. He loved to help his colleagues in writing out their papers. There were occasions when he would practically dictate an entire article to his friends on the telephone.

Before joining IGNOU he taught at Moti Lal Nehru College, Delhi University. His research work was on Robert Lowell. His published works included books on American Criticism, Eliot's poetry, Joyce's Ulysses, Beckett's Waiting for Godot and on Linguistics. He was unanimously elected as the Secretary of the IACS. He did a number of translations for the Sahitya Academy. But perhaps what he will be remembered most for was the zest with which he approached a subject and his sense of humour. No note on him can ever adequately describe that.

Vasant Sharma

FORTELL'S ACHIEVEMENTS +

FORTELL'S Achievements in 2007-08

A Five-Day ELT workshop at Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur from Feb 26-March 2, 2007.

Resource Person

A. L. Khanna

Objective

Capacity building of rural instructors of Hazira, Surat (Gujarat)

Orientation workshop for textbooks development for rural and semi urban children in classes 1-8.

March 26-April 1, 2007 at Vidya Bhawan Udaipur.

Resource Persons

Prof R. K. Agnihotri and A. L. Khanna

Mukti Sanyal of Bharati College, University of Delhi attended the Educational and Cultural program in Los Angeles and 41st Annual TESOL Convention in Seattle, USA March 2007.

Funded by the Regional English Language Office, US Embassy, New Delhi

Two-day Orientation Programme on Development of Language skills for master Trainers

Resource Person

Diane Harley, University of Pennsylvania, USA, April 26-27, 2007 RPVV KishanGanj, Delhi

Workshop on Business English on April 2, 2007 in SPM College, University of Delhi

Resource Person

Diane Harley, University Of Pennsylvania, USA

Workshop on Effective Reading Strategies and Resources on May 15, 2007 in Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi

Resource Person

Dr Neil J. Anderson from Brighton Young University, Provo. Utah, USA

ELT Workshop at Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, August 23-26, 2007

Resource persons

A. L. Khanna and Falguni Chakravarty

Two-Day National Seminar on Materials Production for Developing Aural-oral skills for Schools, August 27-28, 2007 at Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, Kolkata

Organisation

Kolkata Chapter of FORTELL

English Language Capacity Building Workshop for Non Formal Education (NFE) centre Instructors from Oct 23-28, 2007 at Kaya Training Centre, Udaipur

Resource Persons

A. L. Khanna and Falguni Chakravarty

Talk on Developing as ELT Professionals: Teaching and Learning Strategies in ELT on Feb 14, 2008 at R. L. A. College, University of Delhi.

Speaker

Sandra J. Briggs, President TESOL

Award of Scholarship to participate in TESOL 2-5 April, 2008 Convention in New York.

Grantee

Dr A.L Khanna, Secretary, FORTELL

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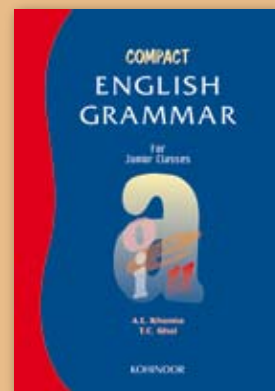
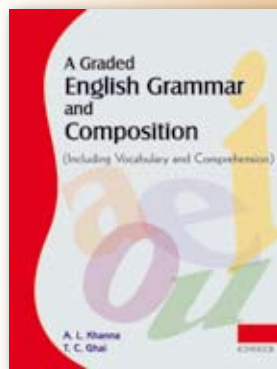
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